

Amendment requires reporting on true cost of wars

Washington, DC – Today, the House of Representatives passed Congressman Bruce Braley’s (IA-01) “True Cost of War” amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act. Braley’s amendment would require a full accounting of the human and financial costs of the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya from the Departments of Defense, State and Veterans Affairs.

“In the last 10 years, Congress has appropriated over a trillion dollars for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and most recently in Libya,” said Rep. Braley. “But what we don’t account for in that figure is the more than 5,800 U.S. Service members who’ve been killed in the line of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq. Or the more than 40,000 who’ve been wounded and who will spend the rest of their lives treating injuries like PTSD, severe burns and amputated limbs. These are not just costs that our troops and their families bear – these are also significant costs for the Department of Veterans Affairs and all American taxpayers. As a nation, we have a right to know what these conflicts will actually cost us.”

Earlier this year, Rep. Braley returned from a Congressional fact-finding mission in Afghanistan where he met with General David Petraeus and discussed the cost of the Afghanistan war.

“With our neighbors currently deployed to Afghanistan with the Iowa National Guard, these wars are incredibly personal for me and the people of my district,” said Rep. Braley. “I’ve met with dozens of my constituents – young men and women and their families – who have sacrificed a great deal in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. And when I meet injured soldiers and I see the hardships – physical and financial – that they and their families will endure for the rest of their lives, it becomes crystal clear that the true cost of the war is not being accurately reported. With this amendment, we can change that.”

The amendment, similar to Rep. Braley’s bipartisan True Cost of War Act, requires the President to work with the Secretaries of Defense, State and Veterans Affairs to submit a written report to Congress on the long-term human and financial costs of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Rep. Braley has been fighting for a true accounting of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars since he came to Congress.